

# Dear IEP Team

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Dear IEP Team:

Wow. That was a heck of an IEP meeting, right? I know having an advocate at these meetings always makes the meetings a little (or a lot) longer and if you are anything like me, you are exhausted when they are done. I hope you don't take the presence of an advocate as a signal that there is a 'fight' to be had or that we intend to play the blame game with the school. Please understand that the advocate is there to make sure that the student with dyslexia we discussed today is offered the Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) for which she is entitled. Please understand that we know this child has a potential that is not being met, but could be met if we could agree on the appropriate course of action. Please understand that our questions and suggestions regarding goals are not an attack of your writing ability or your ability to teach, but our only way to make sure that this child with dyslexia will be working toward the ultimate goal of reading and writing at grade level in a way that responds to his individual needs. Please understand that our questions and suggestions regarding the intervention you propose to use is also not an attack on your teaching ability, but rather our attempt to help you understand that we have done our homework and we know what will work for this child.

We understand that this is only one of ten IEP meetings you might have this week. We understand that you have 30-35 kids on your caseload and that you are overworked. We understand that you do not have the tools and training you need to teach this child with dyslexia. We would like you to understand that we admire your work as an educator. We admire and understand that you probably became an educator so that you could make a difference for children every day. We understand that your university programs failed to teach you about the twenty percent of students who need a different approach to reading. It must be so frustrating for you to not be able to reach these very capable kids.

Now that we understand each other, can we move forward and fight for what the child needs versus fighting each other? This child with dyslexia, and the others on your caseload who don't have an advocate, would really appreciate it and they will show that by thriving in your class.

Sincerely,

This child's advocate